

A
Serious and Friendly
C A L L
T O T H E
DISSENTERS:

O R,
The Necessity of living in Communion
with the Establish'd Church of *England*.

W H E R E I N,
Its Liturgy is vindicated, and prov'd
to be most Primitive, Useful, and Edi-
fying, and Free from all Corruptions
of Popery and Superstition—Which
may serve for an Answer to a late
Book, by One Mr. *Robinson*—
Entitled, *A Review of the Case of*
Liturgies, &c.

Particularly adapted to the Capacities, and for the
Use of the Common-People, whether *Church-men*
or *Dissenters*.

By *R. GRIFFITH*, A. B.
A Divine of the Church of *England*.

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TO THE
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SOME will, perhaps, think this Paper Imperfect, and Defective, because it leaves out Episcopacy, and Infant Baptism, the two chief Points, that the Church and Dissenters differ about: Therefore it is necessary to Advertise the Reader, that the Author thought the Treating of those two Principles superfluous here, for three Reasons.

First, Because it would have swell'd this Discourse to a bigger Bulk and Price, and so not answer'd the Design of it, for the Use of the Common and poorer sort of People, for whom it is Chiefly intended. Secondly, Because these two Points are so compendiously Discuss'd already, by many Learned Divines, particularly by the Pious Dr. Wells and Mr. Wall, that it cannot be done so well in so narrow a Compass. Thirdly, Because the Anabaptists, provided they can be convinc'd of the Lawfulness and Usefulness of our Liturgy, may (as I humbly conceive) join in Communion with the Church of England, notwithstanding their Principle of Anti-pædobaptism.

For tho' it be the Doctrine of the Church of England, That Children ought to be Baptized in
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To the READER.

their Infancy, and Admonisheth all Parents not to defer the Baptism of their Children; yet She compels no Parent to Baptize his Child against his Will, nor Excommunicates any for not Baptizing his Children in their Infancy, unless when through his wilful Neglect they Die without Baptism. So that, in my Judgment, we may communicate together in Religious Worship, notwithstanding our present Difference about Infant Baptism. But, if in this Opinion, I am singular, I beg my Superiours Pardon, and am ready to recant upon better Information.

The World knows our Divisions are now grown to the Heigth, and therefore I hope I need not any Apology for the following Discourse. If the Reader will be pleas'd to Peruse it without Prejudice and Partiality; or with that good Intention and Charity that I writ it, I don't then doubt, but it will turn to his Profit, which is the Earnest Desire of his

Faithful Friend and Servant,

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Beloved Brethren of the Dissenting Party,

SOME of the Ancients tell us, that *Schism* is a *Sin*, not to be expiated, no not with *Martyrdom*; and that even to die for the *Head*, will little avail *him* who hath divided the Church, *his Body*: That pure Religion, and undefiled before God, cannot raise a *Schism* in the Church; for if there be an *Error*, Religion teacheth us to pardon *It*; if an Injury, to forget *It*. If a Religious Man is a *Schismatick*, he is so, *Oblitus Professionis suae*, quite beside the Meaning of his Profession; the chief *End* whereof is

to gather *All* into *One*, and to preserve the *Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*.

Now, as Christian Charity teacheth us to *forbear one another in Love*, and to make all reasonable *Allowances* for the Errors and Infirmities of our *Brethren*, especially of those who are truly Conscientious; so doth *It* equally oblige us to *turn them from the Error of their Ways*, and *not suffer Sin* to lie upon *Them*.

Considering therefore how the Credulity of a great many ignorant (otherwise well-meaning) *Dissenters*, is impos'd upon; what a dreadful Sin it is, for the Teacher to *deceive*, and his Followers to *be deceived*; and above all, what Mortal Heats and Enmity *This* creates amongst us, (*now more than ever*) it is apparently the indispensable Duty (especially of the Ministers of the *Gospel of Peace*) to endeavour to put a Stop to the fatal Consequences of *such a growing Evil*, by examining into, and removing the *Cause of It*.

'Tis true, All that the *Best* can write, will not prevail with the *Prepossessed* and *Self-conceited*. And therefore if ever any *One* means to reap any *Benefit* by what he reads, he must then look upon himself as an indifferent Person, not as wedded to *this* or *that* Opinion, purely for the Sake of supporting and propagating *It*, right or wrong; but as a Christian (whose Religion obliges him to *try all Things*, and *bold fast that which is good*) he must sincerely intend to reform his Error, if upon a deliberate, serious, and impartial Enquiry, he shall find himself to be in *It*.

And since there are many *Dissenters* of a *quiet, sober, and peaceable* Disposition, who are ready to receive Instruction, (by whom, and whensoever it cometh) and would be glad to communicate with us, were they really convinc'd, that their *Separation* is *sinful and needless*; I cannot in Charity but hope, that such honest and well-dispos'd Brethren will be convinc'd, by what I am now going to write, in order to prove it.

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'Tis too melancholy a Consideration, This—That the more Ignorant of *either Party* know not what it is they differ about; and yet upon the Account of their *different Perswasion*, the Contention and Hatred between them is become almost irreconcilable. And since the poorer Sort of *these* have neither *Money* to buy, *Time*, nor *Capacity*, to read the Books now extant on both sides; I presume, it will be of great Benefit to both *Church-men* and *Dissenters*, to have the State of the Dispute between them, reduc'd within a narrower Compass; that the *One* may be confirm'd in their *Principles*, and the *Other* convinc'd of their *Error*.

This is the Design of the following Discourse; which I shall conclude with a serious *Disswasive* from *Schism*, and with Direction how both Parties ought to behave themselves, in order to their being united.

The Dispute now between us, is concerning the Lawfulness of the Book of Common-Prayer. The *Dissenters* say, They cannot conscionably joyn with us in the Use of it upon three special Accounts. 1st. Because they don't look upon *Forms* of Prayer, at least of Human Composure, to be lawful, or so expedient as *Extempore*-Prayers. 2^{ly}. Because our *Prayer-Book* in many Places is the same with the idolatrous and superstitious *Mass-Book*. 3^{ly}. Because of the *Number* and *Burthen* of its Rites and Ceremonies.

The first Thing therefore necessary to prove (in order to remove such a Mistake) is, the Lawfulness of *Forms* of Prayer, and Liturgies in general. And this I shall do; 1. From Scripture; 2. From the publick and constant Use of them in the *Jewish* and Primitive Christian Church; And, 3. From the Reasonableness and Necessity of set *Forms* of Prayer, with Respect to our Infirmities.

I don't pretend to undertake the doing of this, with new Arguments of my own, but chiefly with a brief and pertinent Collection of those I find ready to my Hands in those excellent Authors, that have largely written before on this important Subject.

First, Then, I am to prove from Scripture the Lawfulness of *Forms* of Prayer and Liturgies in general. That the *Jews* had an establish'd *Liturgy*, only the ordinary *Dissenters* are ignorant of. And *This*, which was compos'd of set *Forms*, they daily us'd in their Temple and Synagogues, at the Hours of Prayer. We read in the New Testament, that our blessed Lord, and his Apostles, join'd with the *Jews* in the publick Use of it; for it is expressly said, that they went up to the Temple, at the *Hour of Prayer*; and to the *Synagogues* on the *Sabbath Days*. And now amongst the *Forms* which God Prescrib'd, and were in the Jewish Liturgies, that in *Numb. 6. 23.* is One. *Aaron*, and in him, all the succeeding Priests, were publickly to bless the People—Saying these very Words, *The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his Face to shine upon thee; and give thee Peace, &c.* Again, for the Expiation of an uncertain Murder, the People were commanded to say after the Priests, this very Form; *Our Hands have not shed this Blood, neither have our Eyes seen it: Be Merciful O Lord unto thy People Israel, whom thou hast redeem'd, and lay not Innocent Blood, to the People of Israels Charge.* God promis'd to forgive them this Murder, upon their saying this Form. *Deut. 21. 7, 8* David's Psalms were appointed to be Sung in the publick Worship, as appears from the Order of King *Hezekiah*, *2 Chron. 29. 29, 30.* Where the King and Princes, command the *Levites* to sing Praise unto the Lord, *with the Words of David and Asaph the Seer.* Thus again *Ezra, 3. 11.* We read that the People sung by Course together, in praising and giving Thanks unto the Lord, according to the Ordinance of *David King of Israel*; i. e. according as *David* had order'd the Performance of God's Publick Worship at *Jerusalem*. But besides all this—the Learned do prove, that even the *Form* of Prayer our Lord himself hath taught us, was Compos'd out of the *Jewish Forms*, in which it is wholly found (excepting these Words [*As we forgive them that Trespass against*

against us.] Now the Reason why the *Jews* had not that Clause in their *Prayers*, was, because the Law of *Moses* allow'd them in some Cases, to return Evil for Evil. But to return: These Words, [*Our Father which art in Heaven*] is in their *Forms* of *Prayer* called [*Seder Tephilloth*.] *Hallowed be thy Name, and thy Kingdom come*, is in their Form, called [*Kaddish*.] 'Let thy Memory be glorified in Heaven above and in Earth beneath, is likewise, in their [*Seder Tephilloth*] *Forgive us our Sins*, is, in their 18th daily *Prayers*: *Deliver us not into the Hand of Temptation*, is in that, and the Book, call'd [*Musar*.] *For thine is the Kingdom, the Power &c.* which is the *Doxology*, is, faith *Drusius* their usual Conclusion; and hence *Grotius* notes, how far our Saviour was from affecting Novelty, or despising any thing because it was a Form; for as you see, he collected his own *Prayer*, out of the *Jewish Liturgy*. It would be endless, and unnecessary, to heap together all the set Forms, prescrib'd by God in the Old Testament; these already produc'd, being all of them to the Purpose, and sufficient to prove the Lawfulness of Forms in general.

Now, it is great Folly and Ignorance to say, That the *Jewish* Forms of *Prayer*, were only Ceremonious, and Temporary; and from thence to argue against the Use and Lawfulness of *them* under the Gospel. It is true, that the *Jewish* Sacrifices and Circumstantial, about their publick Worship, were to continue, but to the coming of Christ. But publick *Liturgies* are of a standing and perpetual Obligation, in as much as they consist of *Prayers* and *Praises*, which are *Sacrifices* that must continually be offer'd to God, even to the End of the World. And now that *Liturgies* have ever been thought of most excellent Use, and Edification, in the publick Worship: I am ready to prove in the 2d Place, from the early, and constant use of *them*, in the *Primitive Church*.

St. Cyril wrote a Comment upon the *Liturgy*, which was us'd in *Jerusalem*, in his time: This *Liturgy* was receiv'd in the Church of *Jerusalem*, within 170 Years after the Death of the Apostles: And is by *Proclus*, and the 6th general Council, said to be of St. *Johns* own Composition.

These Words in our Communion Office [*Lift up your Hearts*] are in that *Liturgy*; and likewise in the *Liturgies* of *Rome*, and *Alexandria*. St. *Cyprian*, who liv'd an Hundred Years after the Apostles, makes mention of these Words. And moreover St. *Austin* says, that they are Words deriv'd from the very Age of the Apostles.

Clemens of *Alexandria*, who was living in the Year 160, sets down these Words, as the Christian Form then of Praising God — Praising the Father, and the Son, with the Holy Ghost. So that it seems — the *Glory be to the Father*, &c. is a Form older than the *Arians*. For they are sharply reprov'd by the Orthodox Fathers, for altering it, to serve their own turn.

Eusebius says, that very early, there were many various *Psalms*, and *Odes*, compos'd by Christians, concerning the Divinity of our Saviour; and in his 2d Book of *Eccles. Hist.* c. 171, he urges it as an Argument to prove the *Essenes* Christians, because (as we of the Church of *England* read the *Psalms* in imitation of them) they sung, by turns, answering one another. Now by the By, this way of Praying and Praising God by Parts, (which is by many ignorant People condemn'd) *Nicephorus* says, was a Practice deriv'd from *Ignatius*, who was a Scholar of the Apostles. I cannot but observe here, that it is a Wonder any Sect of Christians, should set themselves to oppose so plain a Proof for *Liturgies* in the Primitive Times: For by the Testimonies already produc'd, it appears that the very next Successors of the Apostles, made use of them.

Lucian makes mention of a Prayer, which the first Christians us'd in their publick Worship, αἱ
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πατερὸς ἀρχαίμενος, i. e. a Prayer, which begins with the [Father] by which he meant, no doubt, the *Lord's Prayer*. And yet a Writer of the Dissenting Party (whose Book is this Year re-printed, with a new Title to it) produces One *Lucian*, as One that was against the Use of Forms of Prayer. He cites him to prove, it was the Practice of the Primitive Christians to pray in their Assemblies, without a Form; and with him, a Heap of other Authors. But those of the Orthodox Writers, that mention any such thing, are to be understood, as giving only an Account of the Miracles known at that time in the Church, and the extraordinary Gift of the Spirit of Preaching and Praying, which none can now pretend to; or else they are to be understood, as speaking of the Affairs of the Church under the State of Persecution, when they could not enjoy the free Use and Exercise of their Religion; which alters the Case very much. For that some of the first Christians under Persecution (when they met together) us'd not the Liturgy; 'twas not because they thought it unlawful for them so to do, but because they could not then (without manifest Danger of their Lives) perform God's publick Service after any other Manner. Many Things are lawful to be done in Cases of Necessity, which are not so at other times; nay, the omitting to do a thing in Case of Need, which is otherwise unlawful, becomes sinful. *David* had sinned in eating of the Shew-Bread, and the Apostles in plucking off and rubbing the Ears of Corn, if they could have found Bread and Provision any other way. And on the contrary, they had sinned, if out of Fear of transgressing the Law, they had neglected to preserve themselves alive. Whence I may safely argue, that the first Christians did many Things under the State of Persecution, which they did not look upon to be lawful, or so expedient, when they enjoy'd Peace and Rest round about them. True it is, that the *Donatists* and some other Sectaries omitted the Use of Liturgies, and preach'd and pray'd by a pretended Inspiration. But

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it is to no manner of Purpose to produce the Authority of *these* against us, because they have been condemn'd by the Holy Catholic Church as Schismatics; and so their Doctrine or Practice is to be no Rule or Example to us. This (by the way) *may* serve for a Caution to those who take *Authorities* upon Trust; from *Men*, who impose upon their Readers Ignorance; and who, to be thought skilful and learned in Antiquity, heap together a numberless Class of such Heterodox Authors. This is really a very disingenuous Way of Dealing, that many of late have taken up — I could heartily wish, that these Men would seriously consider, and lay to Heart that dreadful Curse denounc'd against such a Practice — *Cursed is he that leadeth the Blind out of his Way*, Deut. 27.18. I should think, that the Testimonies, that I have already brought, were sufficient to prove the Use of Liturgies in general; but more than this we have them also establish'd by general Councils. ' The Council of *Laodicea*, holden about the Year of Our Lord, 364, expressly decrees, that the same Liturgy or Form of Prayer, then us'd in the Church, should be always us'd both Morning and Evening. *Can. Laod.* 18. And this very Canon is taken into the Collection of the Canons of the Catholic Church. Now in the Year 541, these Canons were made *Imperial Laws*, by *Justinian*. " And thus we see, that for near 600 Years after Our Saviour Christ, we have sufficient Testimony for the publick Use of Liturgies, and Forms of Prayer, which was the first Thing that was necessary, and lay upon me to prove. The second Objection made against the Lawfulness of joyning with us in the Use of the Common-Prayer-Book, is, that in many Places it has too much of the *Roman Mass-Book* in it. The very Sound of the Word [*Mass*] startles them. But this is also the Effect of great Ignorance; for indeed, originally the Word [*Mass*] had no such dangerous Signification, if I am not very much mistaken.

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But however That be, I am sure it is a (Term) that gives great Offence, altho' there is no Reason given, why it does, save only that it is a *Popish* Word: And this very Reason is, by ignorant Zealots, thought sufficient to condemn every thing else that we retain or borrow from the Church of *Rome*. For this Cause *they* find Fault with our Terms, [*Mattins* and *Vespers*] altho' they signifie originally no more, than Morning or Evening Service ——— They condemn likewise our Churches, Baptisteries, or Fonts, Altars, Pulpits, Surplices, Vestments, for no other Reason, but because the *Roman* Catholicks use *them*: Whereas in Truth, these Things (without the Abuse of them) are lawful and necessary, and were us'd in the Church, long before Popery crept into *It*. The *Roman* Church was once a pure, as well as the most flourishing Church in the World: And tho' *She* is at present corrupt, nevertheless she still retains the Fundamentals of Christianity, and most of the Customs and Ceremonies of the pure, primitive, and soundest Part of the Catholic Church. And here let it be noted, that these are the Ceremonies that we use, having laid aside those which the Church of *Rome* apparently abuse to Superstition or Idolatry. Our Dissenting Brethren have therefore no just Cause to complain of our Book of Common-Prayer, for it's retaining some few Forms that are in the Mass-Book; for even the Mass-Book itself is in many Places compil'd by the ancient Liturgies of both *Eastern* and *Western* Churches in their purest Times. You may then call our Liturgy (the Mass) or by what Name you please; it is nevertheless no other (altho' the *Roman* Catholicks use it in part) than what is agreeable to, and for the most part in Substance, the *same* with the Liturgies of the *Ancient Church* in its Purity. 'Tis true, some Ceremonies, that we still retain, are abus'd by Popery to Superstition. But this is no Reason, why (if they be decent and necessary) we, who can use without abusing *them*, should lay *them* aside, any more than we should lay aside the Use of Food and Raiment, because others abuse

abuse *these good Creatures* to *Luxury* and *Excess*. It would have been a *Deformation*, (as some of our Dissenting Brethren themselves express it) rather than a *Reformation* of Religion, if we had laid aside whatever has been abus'd by Popery. 'The Reformation was so manag'd with Christian Prudence and Charity, that there was no Difference or Alteration made, but what absolute Necessity requir'd. And therefore in compiling and altering our Liturgy, we still retain'd the Use of those Ceremonies, which Antiquity, with good Reason, perform'd, laying aside the Popish Abuse of them, looking also not only at ancient Custom, but the End of Ceremonies, with Respect to the Apostles Rule.—*Let all Things be done in Decency and Order.* This we have declar'd to our Brethren from time to time, by our Doctrine, and by Hundreds of Books written upon this Subject; *Viz.* That we enjoyn the Use of these Rites and Ceremonies, free'd from all Superstition, and from ascribing any Efficacy to Them. We teach, that Ceremonies have no Spiritual Virtue in them; that we enjoyn them, not to better the Duty to which they are joyn'd, nor to make any Satisfaction by the Use of them; that we have no other Respect in enjoyning them, but to the aforesaid Precept of the Apostle, [*Let all Things be done, &c.*] And this Precept of the Apostle is (as we think) observ'd better with these Rites and Ceremonies, than without *them*. And thus much may suffice to justify the Purity of our publick Worship.

But the chief Complaint is, that these Ceremonies are too Numerous, and Burthensome, and therefore against the simplicity of the Gospel, and Christian Liberty. 'Tis certainly a Fault in that Church, where they are so: And this was one Reason that we reform'd from the Church of *Rome*: Indeed this had been no sufficient Warrant for us so to do, had not *her* Ceremonies been burthensome, for Weight as well as Number, and unsupportable by Reason of apparent Superstition. But herein the
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Blessed Reformation is ungratefully as well as unjustly reflected upon. The *Dissenters* owe the Reformation altogether to the Bishops, and Clergy of the Church of *England*. They were the *Men* that began it, Defended it, and Dy'd for it — And therefore it look't like Pride and Ingratitude in the first Dissenters, to divide, and separate from the first Reformers. By pretending to reform further, they stript Religion Naked, and left her without any Beauty, or Comeliness, and so expos'd her, to the Scorn and Contempt of her Enemies. But our Ceremonies, are not so numerous. They are all significant, necessary and decent. There were as many us'd, even in the very Times of the Apostles. We read, that Women were Order'd by St. *Paul*, to be cover'd in the Church: And this Ceremony was not only intended for *Decency's* sake, but it did also put them in Mind, of their Subjection to their Husbands, as the Apostle tells us, 1 *Cor.* 2. In those earlier Days, they were us'd at Baptism, to pull off their old Cloaths, and put on new, to represent to them the Duty of putting off the Old Man, so often inculcated by the Apostle. Likewise they us'd the Ceremony of the Holy Kiss, in their Assemblies, to which relates the Apostle's Command — Greet one another with an Holy Kiss. This Ceremony was to mind them of that Charity, which our Saviour so often recommended before his Death, and which the Christians of those Days shew'd, they had for one another. It were happy if this Ceremony was us'd still; or at least that we had that Charity for each other; that it minds us of. The first Christians also stood up, at the Reading of the Creed, — to signify their readiness to profess the Christian Faith, to stand to, and Defend it even to Death. The Use of the Surplice was of Old, in both the *Eastern* and *Western* Churches, and it was to put the Congregation in Mind of the *Holy Duties*, they came to perform: And likewise the Minister, of his Holy Function, that he might

might take care to Sanctifie it, and imitate the great *Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls*, whose *Person* he represents. 'We use (according to *Ancient Custom*) the 'Ring in Marriage, as a visible and significant *Symbol* 'of that Love and Union, that should be, between Man 'and Wife; and for Remembrance thereof, it is *now*, 'and was formerly, still kept and worn by the Woman 'ever after."

As for the Cross in Baptism, so much Objected against — It was made use of in the *Ancient Church*, long before the Times of Popery. Though the *Roman Catholics* abuse it to Superstition, this is no Reason (as has been already shew'd) why we should lay it aside. 'Why and wherefore we Use it, we have already sufficiently declar'd in the *Office of Baptism*; where the 'Church says, that it is us'd, in Token, that the *Party* 'Baptiz'd, shall not be ashamed of the Cross of Christ."

The *Jews* and *Heathens* were used to Ridicule, and Despise the first Christians, as Worshippers of a Crucify'd God.' To shew therefore that they were not ashamed of their Master, the Christians either wore the Cross, as a Badge of their Profession, or, sign'd themselves in Publick, with the Sign of it. I shall not here pretend to shew the Miracles that are ascrib'd to it; for it is certain from Antiquity (though the *Romanists* lay too great a stress upon it) that, before the Abuse of it to Superstition, the Miracles of the Cross, were visible and great. But the Church of *England*, at this Day, Uses It, with no other Respect, but as it is a significant Ceremony—*viz.* 'For a Remembrance and Testification of 'That, which indeed is every Christian's Duty—Name- 'ly—not to be ashamed of the Cross of Christ, but to 'Fight Manfully under his Banner.' The Christians of *Aethiopia*, Imprinted the Cross on their Childrens Forehead, with Fire, that they might remember, as often as they look't in the Glass, that they were Christians, and Heirs of the Cross, as well as of the Kingdom

dom. This then being the sole End of our Church, in retaining It; the Use of It (especially considering to what a pass Christianity is now brought amongst us) ought to be still continued; at least it can be no Occasion of keeping any from our Baptism, that is desirous of it: Since Baptism is declared to be as Effectual, and is at any time Administred to Scrupulous Persons without it. This plainly shews that the Church of England ascribes not any Spiritual, or Sacramental Efficacy to it; but uses it (according to Primitive Custom) only with Respect to the End abovementioned.

Next, our Kneeling, especially at the Sacrament, is lookt upon as a Relick of Popery: Indeed did we mean by this Posture, to pay any Divine Adoration to the Bread and Wine, as Transubstantiated; (as the Romanists do) we should be justly charged with Idolatry: But we believe no such Change in the Elements of Bread and Wine, after Consecration; and therefore we cannot be supposed to Kneel, but to the end we may thereby express our Reverence, Humility, and Gratitude, to God only: And since our Saviour ought to be Adored at his Table for his Wonderful Love to us, therefore what Posture soever is fit to Express our Reverence and Thankfulness, is not at all unsuitable to the Holy Sacrament; and consequently *Kneeling* is not unsuitable, because 'tis an External sign of Reverence. No sober, considerate Man will say, that it is improper to kneel at the Blessed Sacrament, where we Commemorate those Sufferings, part of which our Saviour endur'd on his bended Knees. But however, since our Dissenting Brethren, think that sitting is a more proper Posture at that Feast, as being the Posture us'd by our Saviour himself and Apostles, at the Institution of it; I shall endeavour to convince them of this Mistake, by shewing that our Saviour used the Posture which the *Jews* then did, at the Celebration of the Passover; at which time he Instituted the Lords Supper in the Room of it. Now Originally the Gesture appointed
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by God himself, to be observed at the Eating of the Passover, was a [Standing] and not a Sitting Posture. But the *Jews*, after a long Interval of Time, through Neglect, changed it into a kind of a leaning Posture; which was the very Posture the Evangelists speak of, us'd by our Lord, at the Institution of the *Sacrament*. This was the Table Gesture then us'd by the *Jews*, at their Common *Meals*, more like a Prostration of the Body, than a Sitting-Posture, ἢν ἀνακείμενος ἐν τῷ κολπῷ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ——— He was leaning on Jesus's Breast, saith St. *John* of himself, *i. e.* he sat next to our Saviour at Supper, upon one of those Beds, or Couches, that were so made, as that the Persons who lay upon them, seem'd to lean on their next Neighbours Breasts. It should seem to me, that in that Posture, their Feet did not touch the Ground. For we read it was Customary with the *Jews*, to wash their Feet, before they lay down to Supper, probably, that they might not foul the Couches whereon they lay: However, it was a Posture quite different from *Sitting*: So that if the Dissenters will conform exactly to the Posture us'd by our Saviour, at the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, they ought neither to sit nor stand, when they receive the Holy Sacrament, but lean, and Prostrate themselves, as he and his Disciples did. And by the same Rule that any one can prove, that it is necessary to sit or lean, at the Sacrament, in imitation of our Saviour; by the same Rule, I say, we may prove it is necessary that we likewise wash one another's Feet, before the Sacrament, in imitation of him: For we read, *Our Saviour also wash'd his Disciples Feet*. But the Truth is, our Saviour's Example will Teach us a quite different Thing; *viz.* to conform to the Customs and Ceremonies of the Establish'd Church, to which we belong. For he himself conformed to the Customs that obtained in the *Jewish Church*, though they were different from those Originally Instituted: As appears from the Posture he us'd at the Celebration of the Passover: For God by *Moses* commanded

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commanded it to be Eaten *Standing*, with their *Loins girt, their Shoes on their Feet, and their Staff in their Hands*, to put them in Mind that they came out of *Egypt* in haste: But by a long Tract of Time, the exact observance of this Gesture, was forgotten, and laid aside; and to this Day, the *Jews* Celebrate and eat the Passover, in another Posture. And though this was a kind of an Innovation, and Breach of Scripture-Rule, yet our Blessed Saviour conformed to the Custom of the Time and Place he lived in, rather than give any occasion of Offence, or disturb the Peace of the Church, by a needless Scruple, or causeless Separation from it, upon the Account of such an indifferent Innovation. Which is really an Example worthy of our Imitation, and ought to be of great Weight with Christians who (if they will become such in Deed, and not in Name only) are to the utmost of their Power, required to seek those things, *that make for Peace, and things whereby they might edify one another.*

Now then, Brethren, 'if a grateful Sense of God's 'infinite Mercy, through the Merits and Sufferings of 'Christ; of the innumerable Benefits, which he hath 'purchased for us, by his *Precious Body and Blood*;' If a Mind truly and deeply humbled, under the sense of its own *guilt*, and unworthiness to receive any Mercy at all, from the Hands of our great Creator and Sovereign Lord, whom we, by our manifold Sins, and Wickedness have so highly Provok'd and Incensed against us; if such a pious Frame of Spirit; such an inward Disposition, and spiritual Temper of Soul, become us at the Table of our Dearest Lord; then surely the most humble Posture, the most reverential Gesture of the Body, will best become us too. For, why should not a submissive lowly Deportment of Body suit with this Heavenly Solemnity, as well as an humble Lowly Mind? Now this is that which our Church declares, to be the end of her enjoining this Posture of Kneeling, *viz, for a Signification of an humble and grateful Acknowledgment of the Benefits of Christ, therein given to all Worthy Receivers.*

If

‘ If there be any Reverence due at this so solemn a
 ‘ Feast, most certainly *Sitting* is a very unfit Posture to
 ‘ express it. But if it be Objected, that the Apostles
 ‘ did not receive the Sacrament *kneeling* : I answer, our
 ‘ Application to Christ now, must not be after that Or-
 ‘ dinary and Familiar manner, as *theirs* was, when our
 ‘ Saviour convers’d with them on Earth;” the Disciples
 did not then so pray to him, Worship him, nor ask
in his Name, as afterwards they did, when he was
 taken up from them into Heaven: They knew *him*
 then only after the Flesh, familiarly Conversing with
 him, but now, saith the Apostle *we know him so no
 more*; and if we understand what we are a doing, the
 Infinite distance between Christ and us; and how that
 (when we are admitted to the Sacrament) we are make-
 ing Application to Almighty God, by him, and recei-
 ving from God, through him, the greatest Benefits;
 we cannot but think there is Cause for the greatest Re-
 verence of Soul and Body, that we can possibly ex-
 press at such a Time.

And besides, we have the Authority and Example
 of all Gods People, even from the beginning, on our
 side. Kneeling was a Posture us’d in the publick Wor-
 ship of God at *Jerusalem*—as appears from that Ex-
 hortation of *David*——*O come let us Worship, and fall
 down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker*, Ps. 95. It
 is said of *Elijah*, that when he pray’d, he put his *Head
 between his Knees*: And *Daniel* open’d his Window
 towards *Jerusalem*, and pray’d on his Knees, *three times
 a Day*. Dan. 6. 10. Our Saviour Christ himself, pray’d,
 in his Agony, on his Knees in the Garden. And St.
Paul kneel’d on the Sands, &c. I need not insist, on
 any more Instances of this kind. The contrary Practice
viz. of sitting, or standing at Prayers, is only the
 effect of a flat, dead, and lazy Devotion, unless
 when we labour under such natural Infirmities,
 by Reason whereof we cannot well kneel. I humbly
 hope, that those well-meaning Persons, of both Par-
 ties, who have been hitherto Irreverent at Prayer,
 through Ignorance, will (upon their Reading of this)
 conform

conform hereafter to the Injunction of the Church, and the Example of their devoutest, and most Zealous Neighbours, who constantly kneel at their Prayers, both *Publick* and *Private*.

I cannot think but of one Ceremony more that is complain'd of, as being Superstitious: And that is, our *Bowing* at the Name of [*Jesus*.] It is hard to imagine how the Wit of any sort of Christians could invent, or raise any Objection against this Practice; For it is an Act of Divine Worship, paid to the Person of our Blessed Saviour only; to [*Jesus Christ*] known by that Name. And it is very strange, if any Christian should deny it lawful to Worship and bow down before his Saviour at any time; especially to do it, when he is nam'd, considering what the Apostle saith, *Phil. 2. 10. viz. That at the Name of [Jesus] every Knee shall Bow.* The truth of it is, only the lazy and irreverent, raise a scruple against it. They can find Fault with every thing, that does not comport with their Ease, and Pleasures. 'Tis rather a Reproach to us (who call our selves Christians) that we do not pay this Adoration to Christ so often as he is nam'd, than that we do it at all. For here is no new Worship invented. The Worship that we give, is due to God, and Prescrib'd by him; the Church only determines, when it is most proper that this Worship should be given, and that is, when Jesus is nam'd.

Thus I have gone through, and briefly shew'd the Lawfulness and Primitive Use of those Ceremonies that are most offensive to the *Dissenters*, namely, the *Surplice*, standing up at the reading of the *Creds*, the *sign* of the *Cross* in Baptism, *Ring* in Marriage, *Kneeling* at the Sacrament, and *Bowing* at the Name of Jesus. And I am perswaded, 'tis very easie to reconcile any indifferent Person to the Use of them, that knows so much of their Signification and Nature, as I have now shew'd. But, what if after all the Cry and Clamour of Superstition, against the Church of *England*, they who make it should be only Guilty of it? I doubt not but *this* will easily appear to those, who will be pleas'd to consider, that

that there is *that* which we call a *Negative* Superstition; of which we are Guilty, when we Divide and Separate, and Abstain from the Publick Service of God, upon the Account of Ceremonies.

Not to come to Church, because the Prayers are in set Forms; or not to have our Children Baptiz'd, because of the Cross; not to receive the Communion, because we must receive it kneeling, and the like; is, not only to render our selves Guilty of willful neglect of Duty to God, and Obedience to our Lawful Governours, but also of that very Superstition which we fear and complain of. And this Consideration (were it seriously laid to Heart, as it ought) would help much to heal our *Breaches*, as well as put a stop to our Complaints.

I proceed now in the last Place, to shew the Reasonableness and Necessity of set Forms of Prayer, and of some Rites and Ceremonies, with respect as well to our *Wants* and *Infirmities*, as to *Decency* and *Order*. And (1.) with respect to our Wants and Infirmities. Here I must desire the Reader to Note, that when I argue for the necessity of set Forms of Prayer, I am to be understood to mean only the publick Prayers of the Church: For any Person in his private Prayers, may use his own Words, and need not confine himself to any set Form, provided he can Methodically and Decently express himself, and Concludes all with the Lord's Prayer. But the question is, whether it best answers the Ends of publick Worship (which are the Glory of God, and the good of the People) to have the publick Prayers of the Church, in set Forms or no; and we hold the Affirmative side of the Question, for the following Reasons.

(1.) Because it is impossible for the Congregation to join with the Minister, without set Forms. When a Minister prays *Extempore*, the Congregation can only attend and listen to him; and could they join with him, it will not be always safe for them so to do, since *many* that do pretend to the Gift of Prayer, are often guilty of Tautologies, Incoherencies, and sometimes, even Blasphemous Expressions.

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the Minister that prays Extempore, is forc'd to use such Expressions as come first to hand; and sometimes a hard word, which half the Congregation does not understand, because an easier does not come to his mind; besides many other Inconveniences, which 'tis impossible always to avoid. But now in publick forms the Words are plain and intelligible; and if they were not so, the People's Prayer must be as much interrupted, as if the Minister spake in an unknown Tongue. (2.) 'Because the Congregation can join in a Form, not only with more safety, but also with more Faith and Hope of being heard: For they may be satisfied before-hand, that the matter of their Prayer is good; but they cannot be so satisfied of an Extempore Prayer; considering, that many times, the Minister is dull and heedless; a Stranger, that may be perhaps, erroneous, rash, and ignorant.

And besides, many Ministers mistake sometimes their Passion for their Zeal, or let drop an Error before they are aware, or express themselves so, as an honest Mind may not be able to join with them. 'So that in joining with an Extempore Prayer a Man must judge what is said, before he can consent to it: And if he meet with a rub, the Minister goes on in the mean time, and the Man is left behind at a loss, and perhaps confounded, before he can join again: And no sooner perhaps is he well fixt, but he is troubled again with the same Inconveniency; all which is easily prevented with the use of Forms. (3.) 'Some times many that pretend to the Gift of Praying Extempore, pray very confusedly, or with broken, indecent Expressions, and omit a great deal of the Matter. Sometimes, when they are at a loss, they are forc'd to use fulsom Repetitions; and how is it almost possible, but that a great deal

of flat and empty Nonsense, undigested Conceptions, and unadvised Expressions should escape from their Lips, before they are aware? And yet all these are father'd on the Holy Spirit, as if they were his Dictates and Effusions. These things often put the greatest gifted Men of them all, into disorder and confusion; and then the whole Congregation is at a loss. And now is it not a hard case, that the Devotions of Five Hundred, or a Thousand Persons must be disturb'd by one Mans disorders? For they must either pray after him, or not pray at all. It were endless to enumerate all the other Inconveniences that attend Extempore Prayers in the Congregation; he that desires to see more of them, may consult the pious, and excellent Author of the Abridgment of the London Cases, who says, that amongst many other advantages to be obtain'd by Forms of Prayer, there is this very extraordinary one, viz. that a Man by joining in a form, may be better secur'd of the reality and sincerity of his own Devotion: For he knows before-hand, the Expressions of the Form, and is not so much surpriz'd with the Phrases; and therefore if he finds himself affected, he may more safely conclude, 'tis the Matter, and not the Words, that moves him. Whereas a Man that is tickled with the Words of an Extempore Prayer, may fancy him'self to be very devout, when he has nothing of true Devotion in him.

This may partly serve for an Answer to those who pretend they can join with greater Devotion with new Extempore Prayers, than in known and set Forms. But this being the chief and most popular Objection against Forms of Prayer, viz. that they are common, known, and prescrib'd, and therefore nauseating, and cannot raise that

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Devotion, that new conceiv'd Prayers do: I answer, in the Words of the Ingenious Mr. Young, that the Power and Energy of Prayer does not consist in variety of Words, but only in suiting our Affections to the Words that we use. Now, says he, when we know before-hand the Words that we are to use; 'or when we have them in a Book before our eyes; our Soul is then at perfect leisure, to suit, to raise, and change her Affections, according to the sense and importance of every Word: Whereas while the Soul is in suspense about the meaning of a Sentence, till such time, as it is finish'd (as it must needs happen in new Extempore Prayers) then the Soul is in a great measure depriv'd of this advantageous leisure; and though the Imagination be still kept busie, yet the Affections can never follow but by starts and disorder. But more than this; 'tis Curiosity, rather than Piety that commonly moves Men to effect a Change of Words. They fancy that which pleases themselves best, pleases God best; as if God was changeable like themselves, and to be mov'd with Novelties, and variety of Expressions. But no Man in the World can, praying, discern, but from a set Form, whether his Attention be truly pious or no; because he can then only judge how far Piety moves him, when it moves him alone, and not his Curiosity. This mistake also proceeds from a wrong notion Men have of the Nature of God; or else for want of duly considering that those Affections which are in us, are not to be found in him. Now Men indeed (being of a changeable Nature) are usually wrought upon and inclin'd by Arguments and Entreaties, and by fair Speeches. But it is in vain for us to hope to incline or move God by any of these ways, because he is in himself unchangeable, and in the Holiness and Perfections of

his Nature immutable: Wherefore, if we wou'd have him hear our Prayers, the change must be, not in our Words, but in our selves. And when we become truly pious, we may with great freedom and success use the same words, since we have the same God to pray to, and generally the same wants to pray for; 'and that God who is 'immutable, will be dispos'd to hear us, seeing he 'is unchangeably willing to shew kindness to his 'Servants, and give Assistance to every Soul that 'uprightly desires to fear and serve him.

As for the Arguments produc'd by the Dissenters in their own Vindication, they are generally founded upon a Misinterpretation or Misapplication of some Texts of Scripture, where the Gifts of the Spirit are promis'd. Now all that is necessary to observe here is, that there is a two-fold Promise of the Spirits Assistance in the New Testament. The one is extraordinary, and peculiar to the Apostles and first Christians only; and the other is ordinary, standing, and fixt. The extraordinary Assistance of the Spirit was not given even to the Apostles themselves, but when they were brought before Kings and Rulers to plead the Cause of Christ, and leave before Men a Testimony of it, as appears plainly from *Matth* 10. 18. and therefore it is very ridiculous for the Dissenters to apply that Text, and other parallel places, to their Extempore Effusions; of which it cannot without Blasphemy, be said, it is not you that speak, but the Holy Ghost speaketh in you; seeing if so, all foolish, and impertinent Harangues must be as sacred, and as worthy to be observed, as the inspir'd Scriptures themselves.

The Apostles and Successors had Miracles to attest, that they had the extraordinary Gift of Preach-

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Preaching and Praying. But now this pretended Inspiration of Prayer has not Miracles to warrant it; by which we may conclude it is wholly ceas'd as well as Miracles; otherwise Prayers thus inspir'd wou'd be equal to the Scripture, and infallible, and the Word of God; because whatever God inspires, must needs be so. But this I hope, no sober Dissenter will presume to say of their Extempore Prayers.

There are Two special Reasons to believe, that conceiv'd or Extempore Prayers not only are not by Divine Inspiration, but have the signs of a contrary Spirit; I mean, the Spirit of Witchcraft and Enthusiasm. The first is, the Nonsense, Rudeness and Impertinence that are often mingled with these Extempore Prayers, and which we cannot attribute to the Holy Ghost without Blasphemy. The second is, that we must either suppose this pretended Gift of Inspiration to be confin'd to one Party; or else we must say, 'that the Spirit inspires Contradictions, and induces contrary Prayers to Men of contrary Opinions; which wou'd be Blasphemy to affirm. And yet we know, that several Sects, as Presbyterians, Independents, Quakers, Anabaptists, &c. all pretend to the extraordinary Gift of the Spirit at one and the same time.

Certainly the Holy Spirit can never be the Author of Confusion and Contention; which he must needs be, if all the Sectarists that pretend to it, are thus at once inspir'd by him. From all this one may safely conclude, that there is now no such extraordinary Gift vouchsafed to the Church: That it is Presumption in the highest degree, if not Blasphemy to pretend to it; and that we enjoy no other Gift, but that which is standing and

fixt, and common to all Christians without distinction; that ordinary Gift of the Spirit God still continues in Prayer. The Spirit is said to make Intercession for us with Groans which cannot be utter'd. These Words cannot mean the immediate Inspiration of Words; because the Inspiration here mention'd is above Words and cannot be utter'd. This Intercession therefore of the Spirit, signifies his exciting such Devout Affections in us, as make our Prayers acceptable to God. For, as our Saviour, our Advocate in Heaven, enforces our Prayers with his own Intercessions: So the Holy Spirit, who is our Advocate upon Earth, begets those Affections which render our Prayers Prevalent. And these are the standing and ordinary Operations, which the Scripture attributes to the Spirit in Prayer; and which, as I have already shew'd, are more consistent with set, prescrib'd Forms, than with conceiv'd or Extempore Prayers.

Of the lawful Use of Ceremonies I need only say briefly, that there neither is, nor was, nor can be a Church in the World without them. Even the Dissenters themselves use some; they have proper times for sitting, standing and kneeling, which they must own are Ceremonies. Those we retain of them over and above, are for Decency and Order: And it cannot be denied, but they are great helps to raise the People's Devotion and Affections. Whatever is proper for that end, cannot be useless to Men, or displeasing to God, since he has no where forbidden the use of it. Thus, for instance, the Beauty and Neatness of the Place appointed, and set apart for the Performance of Publick Worship, are apt to strike upon the Imagination, and to beget a kind of sacred Fear and Reverence in the Minds of the Worshippers. The Beauty of God's House, and the Ornaments of it, represent to the Congregation, the Majesty and Purity

Purity of God whom they meet to Worship; and so this excites in them a suitable Devotion, and teaches them to approach the Presence of God with Reverence and Fear. It was for this end that God exhibited himself so gloriously in the Temple at *Jerusalem*. There was for many Ages a certain, miraculous, and conspicuous Light call'd by the Jews the (*Scechinah*) to be seen there, which was a Token of the Divine Presence. All the Ancients whether Jews, or Christians agree, that God is particularly present in the Houses set apart for his Worship. And for this Reason, they bestow'd great Expences upon, and built (when free from Persecutions) very many magnificent Structures, of curious Workmanship, and insuperable Beauty. For they understood (from *Moses* his Description of such Places, that it was their Duty so to do: For, he says, when *Adam* had sinn'd, he hid himself, and went out from the Presence of the Lord, which must certainly mean, his going out of the Place set apart for Gods Worship. For *Adam* could not go out of the Presence of the Lord in any other sense, the Lord being otherwise, every where Present. Thus are we to understand that other Text, and *Cain was drove out of the presence of the Lord*, i.e. he was excommunicated, and not permitted to come to the Place appointed for the Worship of God; which plainly shews, that God is particularly Present in such Places. Our bless'd Saviour himself seems to ascertain this. It is plain he came to abolish whatever had been abus'd by the Jews to Superstition: And yet we read, he was zealous for the House of God: For he drove out of that Part of the Temple, (which was only the Court of the Gentiles) those that turn'd it into a kind of a Market Place, by selling Oxen, Sheep, and Doves therein, for Sacrifices. And though it was only

a common standing Place set apart for the Gentile Profelytes to hear the Law read and expounded, yet our Lord would not suffer any one, so much as to carry a Vessel through it; and he adds a Reason for his having so done, that obligeth all Nations to the end of the World, it is written saith he, *my House shall be call'd the House of Prayer, not to you Jews only, but to all Nations.* And this, by the by, is sufficient to shew the necessity, as well as lawfulness of erecting publick Edifices for God's Worship, and of dedicating and keeping them neat and clean, and free from all common and profane Uses.

Now, it is certain after all that God could receive no Benefit by all this Cost and Pomp. *God dwelleth not in Houses made with Hands,* as saith the Prophet, nor delighteth in their Beauty, or Ornaments, but for our sakes. But he is pleas'd with any Ceremony, that serves to purchase Reverence and Esteem amongst us, for his Religion, and Holy Name. And now that all the few Ceremonies that we use, are such as tend to Edification, and to excite devout and pious Affections in us, none can deny, when he considers the foregoing Reasons, which the Church gives why she retains them.

Having, by this time, I humbly hope, sufficiently, though but briefly prov'd the lawfulness of set Forms of Prayers, and Liturgies, (1.) from Scripture, (2.) from the publick and constant use of Them in the Jewish and Christian Primitive Church; and (3.) from the reasonableness and expediency of Them with respect to our Infirmities.

Having

Having likewise (2) shew'd our Liturgy and Book of Common Prayer, with our Rites and Ceremonies to be Primitive, useful and edifying, and free from all Corruption and Superstition: I am now to conclude with a general Exhortation to Church-men and Dissenters, shewing how both Parties ought to behave themselves in order to their being united.

And (1.) it lies upon us Church-men (if ever we hope to convince erroneous Persons) to shew them good Examples of all kind; to live godly, soberly, and as peaceably amongst them as we can. To bear no malice, nor hatred towards any of them; but study first how to lure them to a good Opinion of us, that so we may have the opportunity of reforming them with the greater freedom and success. But, especially it behoves us to conform exactly in all things to the Order and Discipline of that Church, of which we profess our selves Members. For how can we in reason expect to persuade others so to do, or with justice blame Them for not doing That which we do not do our selves?

I fear many of those, who call themselves (Church-men) go not to Church at all, or but seldom; or at least behave themselves, when they come thither, with that Irreverence and Profaneness, that their coming is rather an Abomination; and yet such Men are often found to be very hot and zealous against Dissenters: But indeed their Arguments and Example serve only to confirm Them in their Errors. Nay furthermore they have been too frequently the sad occasion of driving weak and ignorant People from the Church.

As

As therefore we really desire the favour of Almighty God, the security of his Church, and the Salvation of our Souls, as well as the Conviction of erroneous Persons, we must, in the first place, constantly attend the Publick Worship of God; on Sundays and holy Days, and take care that our Families do so too. They who come so seldom wou'd not come to Church at all, were it not to save the Reputation of being call'd, Church-men. Others again come chiefly to see and to be seen; and so these come only now and then, when they have most time to spare, or when it is a fine inviting day to come abroad, or for Curiosity's sake, when something extraordinary is to be seen or done that Day. And all these coming not for Religion, or Devotions sake, do more harm to themselves and to the Church, by their irreverent Behavior in the Congregation, than if they stay'd away for good. Others again, think, that taking a Journey to see a Relation or a Friend, or making idle, and impertinent Visits, or looking after their worldly and ordinary Affairs at Home, is sometimes sufficient to excuse their Absence from Church. But (1.) I must beg you all Brethren to take it for a Rule of Truth; viz. that if you wou'd reap any Benefit by coming to Church, you must make it the chief care, and constant business of your life. If you could indeed compound with God; if I say God wou'd be content with one part of our Service one Sunday, and that the Devil should have the other the next Day, it wou'd alter the Case. But verily as the case stands, God will have it all or nothing. And therefore it will signifie us nothing, to be now Religious, and anon to be loose; to be now Charitable, and anon

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anon Covetous or Cruel; one Day to come to Church, and the next Day to stay at home, or go to a Meeting-house. No, God Almighty will not be content to be so serv'd. For as he deserves all our Service, so he requires it: He requires *all your Mind, all your Heart, and all your Strength.*

Again, the generality give great Offence, and are indeed much to be blam'd, for coming to Church so late, after Service is begun. These play, and loiter about, that so a good part of it may be over, before they come; for provided they join only in part of the Service and hear the Sermon; they think the Duty of the Day sufficiently done. I shall only desire them to consider this, viz. that they who come not to Church time enough to join with the Congregation in the general Confession of their Sins, loose the Benefit of the Absolution, which immediatly follows it. But (2.)

The Conviction of erroneous Persons depends likewise very much upon our Behavior at publick Prayers. For though many Strangers come to see how we perform the Publick Worship only out of Curiosity, or to find fault, yet I have the Charity to believe that many of the Dissenters come with a better Intention. And then, were the Order and Discipline of our Church, were all her Ceremonies regularly observ'd, according to her Injunctions, how Beautiful, Harmonious, and Inviting wou'd our Publick Service be? How wou'd Strangers behold us at once with Admiration, and Pleasure, and conclude, of a Truth *God is among them!*

Whereas

Whereas on the contrary, our irreverent, indelicate, and wanton Behaviour at Publick Prayers; talking, whispering, and laughing; the Omission of some Ceremonies; the want of serious, sober, and fixt attention to the Word of God read, or preach'd; the laming, and maiming after this manner the Publick Service, is really the Cause that many who see us, slight and condemn it. Thus our good is evil spoken of by our great contempt and abuse of it in the Eye of its Adversaries. If ever therefore we desire to convince Gain-sayers, and teach them not to blaspheme; if we will be zealous for the Religion, Worship, and Glory of God, we must take care to behave our selves in his Presence, with great humility of Mind, with a profound admiration of his Infinite Perfections, and with such devout and humble Postures of Body, that best express the inward Fear and Devotion of our Souls. And then all, that either see, or know what we do, will conclude, surely these People don't serve God in vain, they are really in earnest with their Religion. See, how zealous, fervent, decent, and devout they are in the earnest application of their Souls to God in Prayer: See the Harmony of their Publick Worship, the Order in which it runs; observe the matter and style of their Prayers, how apt, coherent and expressive they are? How agreeable to sound Doctrine, and how fit for Christian People to offer unto God?

Indeed their Forms are very suitable to the ends and purposes of the Publick Assemblies, and the Reason of Publick Worship. We were therefore rash in condemning Them, and must acknowledge, if we cannot unite to them, and edifie by such Things as they use, the fault must be in us, and not in Them.

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These are the happy Conclusions Standers by, wou'd draw from our constant Presence, and devout Behavior at Church. And can we Biethren do any thing more acceptable to God, or more for the Honour and Interest of our Excellent Church, and Conversion of her Adversaries, than constantly to attend with reverence and godly fear at her Publick Worship and Ordinances?

These things, if you consider, you will by Gods Grace return to a better mind; and take care hereafter, that your Behavior in the Presence of God and his holy Angels, may be such, as becometh a Solemn and Religious Address.

In the next place we must shew towards erroneous Persons all the mildness, Candor and Charity that possibly we can; not be provok'd to Wrath, Anger, or Clamor, but endeavor to convince them with Meekness of Wisdom. Severity indeed towards the Obstinate and Refractory is sometimes as wholesome as Physick; I say, such a severity is warrantable by the Word of God. But I now speak of what ordinarily happens in common Conversation between Parties of different Persuasions: That when they Discourse of Religion, they ought to decline all railing Accusations, and bitter Invectives, and hear, talk, and weigh one anothers Arguments, with Patience, Modesty, and Consideration, and upon no account to triumph over one anothers weaknesses. Charity teacheth us to hope and believe the best of Mens Intentions; and therefore we may not condemn all that differ from us, as Reprobates; but conclude that they may have a Zeal for Religion, though it be without Knowledge. Whatever we do, let us be sure to shew our selves just, honest,

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and upright in our dealings with them, that they may have no reason to blaspheme our Doctrine, or to say that we believe one thing, and practise the quite contrary. But above all things, let us live in Peace and Charity, and promote Unity and Quietness amongst our selves; it is our own, and the Churches Interest so to do. Even the Dissenters themselves must, (according to my judgment) in their hearts condemn those dastardly Churchmen that side with them against their Brethren. The greatest Adversaries to Truth that are, have naturally a secret esteem for Men that are honest to their Trust, and true and firm to their Principles; whereas no Man can have a real value for a double Dealer, one that sails with every wind, that is fickle, lukewarm, and inconstant, and true to nothing. The Dissenters justly despise and laugh at such Men for their pains; and they have now the too melancholy opportunity to object against us upon the account of these self-interested Men, and say, how can we safely join with those, who cannot agree amongst themselves? For shame, let us not betray our Trust, and the Church of God, by so base and cowardly a Compliance, and for such selfish and sordid ends: But let us quit our selves like Men of Honesty, Courage, and Integrity, to oppose the Sins of the time, and to defend goodness, and good Causes. Even the many, (to whom we are now become a Reproach) will then, for by our Union and Love, which they shall behold, glorify God in our behalf, and desire Communion and Fellowship with us.

These are the few Directions I propos'd to recommend to Church-men, as being proper, if not the chief Remedies as well to prevent, as cure our Divisions.

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I must now direct my Discourse to our Dissenting Brethren, and earnestly desire them, that they wou'd please to consider and call to mind the first Original Causes of their Separation from the Church of *England*; and from what time it commences. Now it is undeniable, that at the beginning of the Reformation, and to the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, there was not a Sect of Dissenters in *England* of any particular Denomination, save only a few Presbyters; whence come the Presbyterians: And even these Presbyters (who dissented from the Bishops at the Reformation) receiv'd Ordination at the Hands of our Bishops. But in this Queens Reign there arose up a few Anabaptists, headed by one *Comin* a Jesuit, who, to serve the ends of Popery, was the first here in *England*, that pretended to Preach and Pray by immediate Inspiration. This was an Artifice of the Church of *Rome*, to divide the Church in that good Queens Reign, that it might become thereby an easier Prey to Popery.

But the Pious Queen discovering this to be a design against her Government, and the security of the Reform'd Religion, by a seasonable and wholesome severity, dispersed and suppress'd them. But nevertheless the Agents and Emissaries of *Rome* still continu'd and redoubled their Diligence and Efforts, when they found the success of their first Attempts; and so gather'd Them into a little Head again, and towards the latter end of this Queens Reign obtain'd a kind of a Toleration for them, i. e. not to disturb their Meetings, or punish them for their Separation. Ever since that time they gather'd strength, but did not come to any considerable Head, till the Reign of our Late Martyr'd King CHARLES I. in the

time of the Rebellion they increas'd to ten times the Number they were of before: For then a great Number of Church-men, turn'd Dissenters, some out of Fear and Cowardice, and others for Interest, all renouncing their Religion and Loyalty at once.

A great number of the common People, finding the King unsuccessful; took to the strongest side, to be safe; and so turn'd Dissenters, and declar'd for the Rebels. Then some of the backsliding and dastardly Clergy widen'd the Schism, by joining (for Preferments sake) with the prevailing Faction; and thus by degrees, it became a Schism of vast extent, and dangerous consequence. For a great Number of these revolting People having then taken the solemn League and Covenant withal, could not look back and return again to the Communion of the Church, upon the Restoration of King CHARLES II. though they had a mind to it. And finding that they had, by these means, render'd themselves incapable, as it were, of mercy, they resolv'd to go on, strengthened themselves, as *David* expresseth it, in their Wickedness, trusting to the multitude of their Riches, their Strength, Number, and Power. Their Children after them continue the Schism, because they were born and bred in it: And so it is hard to perswade them that their Separation is any Sin, because their Forefathers held, and taught, and instill'd it into Them from their Cradles. Now towards such Persons as these who thus labour under the great Prejudice of Education, we ought to have Charity, and to make Them all the allowance that the Reason of the thing will bear. But then there are others who separate upon quite different Principles, whose Sin can admit of no Excuse. I mean those

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those, whose Parents were of the Church, and brought them to her Baptism, and bred them up in her Communion, who since fell away, and forsook her: And to these in a particular manner I direct my present Discourse, beseeching them in behalf of all their Protestant Brethren of the Church of *England*, to have the Charity to believe, that our Advice to them, proceeds from a serious sense of that Duty we owe to God, and a hearty concern for their Eternal Salvation.

We pray them therefore to consider, whether they did not forsake our Communion, out of Compliance only with Husband or Wife, Master or Mistress, or for some worldly ends, they propos'd to themselves by so doing. And if this be their Case, we pray them to call to mind our Saviour's saying, *He that forsaketh not Father, and Mother, and all that he hath, for my sake, cannot be my Disciple.* Luke 14. 26. Shall we ask, had you any Cause to separate? any Exceptions to make against our Form of Publick Worship; or against the Doctrine or the Discipline of the Church? And if you really had, did you first make them known to your own proper Minister, desiring him to resolve your Doubts, and satisfy your Scruples?

This is the Method you should have taken (without which your Error becomes willful and obstinate) before you had fallen away from the Church, and join'd in a dangerous Schism. We therefore entreat you, Brethren, by the Mercies of God; we pray you, in Christ's stead, be well advis'd before you take Opinions upon trust: And say not, we are satisfied already, when you willfully refuse to confer, and consult with those,

who are your Lawful Ministers, and able to instruct you.

But if you will say, that the Dissenting Teacher whom you follow, is a more edifying, painful, and powerful Preacher, than your own, or that he is more strict in his Life and Conversation, or a more peaceable and charitable Person, than your own Minister; we desire you to come to us, or to give us leave to come to you, and we are ready and able to convince you, that neither the Dissenting Teachers Abilities, or Parts; nor his Talent in Preaching and Praying, nor the soundness of his Doctrine, nor the strictness of his Life, can make him any other, than a false Teacher: (For a Man may teach sound Doctrine and yet be a false Teacher) and therefore though you follow the Dissenting Teachers, and pretend to justify your Separation from us, upon these Accounts, you are notwithstanding guilty of Schism, and whilst you continue so, in danger of Damnation. For since God has appointed an Order in his Church for admitting fit Persons into the sacred Ministry; it is not Lawful for any Lay-Person (be his Parts never so great; Doctrine and Life never so Orthodox, and exemplary) to intrude into that Holy Office, and set up for a Publick Pastor.

And whoever does, is justly to be condemn'd for a false Teacher; and one of those Thieves, and Robbers, who came not in by the Door, *John* 10. 7. 8. for no Man taketh this Honour to himself, but he that is lawfully call'd of God, as was *Aaron*. *Heb.* 5. 4. Now that the Dissenting Teachers are not lawfully call'd, is most evident; because they deny and disobey that Order, which Christ, and his Apostles left in the Church for admit-

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admitting Persons into the Ministry. And this Charge against Them, hath been fully prov'd, by Hundreds of Authors, who have written unanswerably at several times, on this Subject. They tell you indeed, they have answer'd our Books; but then Those they have written are for the most part, such as neither deserve the Name of Answers, nor to be answered. And granting it were otherwise, how is it possible for you to know on which side the Truth of the Controversy between us, lay, without reading what is written on both sides? We are willing you should read as many of their Books as you please, provided you will as impartially read and examin Ours in answer to Them. And if you are in earnest with your Souls, and careful what will become of you hereafter, you will do this. But if you will not, there is no help for you: 'Your Errors are willful, deliberate, and chosen, and for that very reason certainly damnable: For it is of equal danger to live and dye willfully in Schism, as to live and dye in any other Sin. And therefore, we knowing the Terrors of the Lord, do perswade you; we exhort and admonish you betimes, with all the Love and Affection; with all the tender Concern of Brethren and Friends, to join with us in Communion: That, according to our Saviours last Will, and the Apostles earnest Exhortation: We may all, *With one Mind, and one Mouth glorify God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Rom. 15. 6.

To this end may the Holy Spirit of God heal all our Breaches, and compose all Our Differences; that we living as Brethren together in perfect Union and Communion here on Earth, may be translated into the Communion of Saints in Glory everlasting.

Amen.

FINIS.

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will be of great and certain Advantage to
the Publick. 3. That it is absolutely ne-
cessary in order to the Support of our
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Wherein all material Objections against
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py of a Letter from King *Charles* the se-
cond, to the then Lord Mayor of *London*;
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ready summing up of Commodities all
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of the meanest Capacity.

of course, the first thing I should mention is
that the weather was quite good today.
We went for a walk in the park and
saw many beautiful flowers. The children
were very happy and played for hours.
We also had a picnic under a big tree.
The food was delicious and everyone
enjoyed it. We took many pictures
and had a very pleasant day.
The children were very tired when we
got home, but they were all smiling.
We had a very good time and
will definitely go back soon.



